

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 853

S E C R E T NEW DELHI 11514

LIMDIS/NOFORN

FOLLOWING REPEAT CALCUTTA 1994 SENT ACTION NEW DELHI

INFO DACCA. DTD 25 AUG 75.

QUOTE:

CALCUTTA 1994

LIMDIS/NOFORN

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN, PFOR, BG

SUBJ: TALKS WITH GENERALS JACOB AND SHINGAL ON BANGLADESH

1. MAJOR GENERAL HARI SHINGAL, CHIEF OF STAFF EASTERN COMMAND AND GENERAL JACOB'S IMMEDIATE DEPUTY, WAS AT MY HOUSE FOR DINNER AUGUST 23. WE HAD A BRIEF CONVERSATION ASIDE DURING WHICH I ASKED HOW HE VIEWED DEVELOPMENTS IN BANGLADESH. SINGAL SAID THEY HAD BEEN VERY CONCERNED AT FIRST THAT THE COUP MIGHT BRING COMMUNAL STRIFE TO BANGLADESH--THE REPORT THAT THE NEW REGIME WANTED TO RENAME THE COUNTRY QTE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC UNQTE WAS PARTICULARLY WORRISOME--BUT WERE NOW MORE REASSURED. WE DON'T CARE WHAT THEY DO OVER THERE, SHINGAL SAID, AND ARE NOT GOING TO BOTHER THEM AS LONG AS THERE ARE NO REFUGEES COMING ACROSS THE BORDER INTO INDIA. IF

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THERE ARE REFUGEES, SHINGAL SAID, THEN WE WILL BE TO DO SOMETHING;

INDIA IS JUST GETTING GOING AGAIN ON ITS DEVELOPMENT AND CAN'T AFFORD THE BURDEN OF EXTRA MILLIONS OF DISPLACED PERSONS FROM BANGLADESH. SHINGAL DIDN'T ASK ME ANY QUESTIONS BUT SAID EASTERN COMMAND HAD VERY LITTLE INFORMATION ON THE SITUATION IN BWNGLADESH. HE SAID HE THOUGHT GENERAL JACOB WOULD WANT TO SEE ME SOON TO TALK ABOUT BANGLADESH.

2. SINGAL TELEPHONED ME MORNING AUGUST 24 AND ASKED IF I COULD COME OVER TO SEE JACOB THAT MORNING, WHICH I DID. JACOB SAID THINGS LOOKED QUIET IN BANGLADESH BUT HE WASN'T GETTING MUCH INFORMATION OTHER THAN WHAT HAD BEEN IN THE PRESS. HE WAS OF COURSE CONCERNED TO BE ABLE TO FULFILL HIS PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES. IN ANSWER TO MY QUESTION, JACOB SAID THE ARMY HAD NOT TAKEN ANY SPECIAL MEASURES IN REGARD TO BANGLADESH. I SAID THE CONSULATE HAD HEARD VAGUE RUMORS OF TROOP MOVEMENTS. NOT SO, JACOB SAID, AND IN ANY CASE HE HAD NO TROOPS IN THIS AREA OTHER THAN THE SMALL HEADQUARTERS GARRISON FORCE AT FORT WILLIAMS IN CALCUTTA; HIS FORCES ARE ALL UP NORTH QTE MILES AWAY FROM THE BANGLADESH BORDER UNQTE. I ASKED ABOUT THE REPORT IN AUGUST 24 PRESS THAT INDIA'S BORDER PATROL FORCES HAD BEEN STRENGTHENED ALONG THE BANGLADESH FRONTIER (SEE SEPTTEL). JACOB SAID YES THAT IS CORRECT BUT THESE ARE NOT ARMY UNITS.

3. JACOB SAID QTE WE DON'T CARE WHAT THEY DO INTERNALLY OVER THERE, THAT'S THEIR BUSINESS UNQTE BUT INDIA WOULD BE DEEPLY CONCERNED BY TWO THINGS: (A) COMMUNAL STRIFE AND/OR A FLOW OF HINDU REFUGEES INTO WEST BENGAL; AND (B) A CHANGE IN THE FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATION OF BANGLADESH. JACOB ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SO FAR THINGS HAD BEEN QUIET IN BANGLADESH, AND THAT THE NEW REGIME SEEMED ANXIOUS TO ASSURE THE INDIANS OF ITS FRIENDSHIP. NONETHELESS, HE SAID, PRESIDENT AHMAD HAS THE REPUTATION IN INDIA OF BEING PRO-PAKISTANI AND PRO CHINESE AND THIS WAS WORRISOME; MOREOVER, AHMAD'S SPEECH (WHICH ONE JACOB DIDN'T SPECIFY) WAS REplete WITH REFERENCES TO ALLAH, WHICH HAD NOT MADE A GOOD INPRESSION IN INDIA.

4. JACOB ASKED WHAT I THOUGHT THE OUTLOOK WAS FOR STABILITY FOR THE NEW REGIME. I SAID I DIDN'T HAVE ALL THAT MUCH INFORMATION BUT THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN VERY LITTLE OPPOSITION TO THE COUP AND THE NEW REGIME SEEMS TO HAVE THINGS UNDER CONTROL.

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NO ONE COULD ASSURE SOLUTIONS TO BANGLADESH'S MASSIVE PROBLEMS BUT THE NEW REGIME SEEMED AS CAPABLE AND WELL INTENTIONED AS ANY. I STRESSED THAT THE US INTEREST IN BANGLADESH IS HUMANITARIAN AND THAT WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN HAVING A SPECIAL POSITION IN BANGLADESH OR ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE SUBCONTINENT. I SAID MY GUESS WAS THAT IF ANYTHING PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON ARE CONCERNED THAT THE NEW BANGLADESH REGIME WILL WANT MORE ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT FROM US THAN WE CAN OR WOULD WANT TO OFFER. JACOB

SAID HE HAD NEVER CREDITED STORIES OF US INVOLVEMENT IN THE COUP AND COULD UNDERSTAND THAT USG WOULD NOT WANT TO TAKE ON THE BURDENS OF BANGLADESH. WE FEEL EXACTLY THE SAME WAY, JACOB SAID; ALL WE WANT THERE IS STABILITY.

5. AS THE CONVERSATION CONCLUDED JACOB AGAIN MENTIONED HIS CONCERN OVER POSSIBLE COMMUNAL STRIFE IN BANGLADESH, WHICH HE SAID IN ADDITION TO CREATING A FLOW OF REFUGEES COULD HAVE REPERCUSSIONS ON HINDU-MOSLEM RELATIONS IN WEST BANGAL, AND OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF A RAPPROACHEMENT BETWEEN BANGLADESH, PAKISTAN, AND CHINA, WHICH HE SAID WOULD QTE CAUSE US A LOT OF TROUBLE UNQTE. HE SAID HE WOULD BE FOLLOWING THE SITUATION CLOSELY AND WOULD APPRECIATE WHATEVER INFORMATION I COULD PASS FROM TIME TO TIME.

6. TO PROTECT MY ACCESS TO GENERALS JACOB AND SHINGAL, REQUEST THERE BE NO MENTION TO INDIAN OR OTHER FOREIGN OFFICIALS OF THIS CONTACT OR OF SUBSTANCE OF THEIR REMARKS. JACOB HAS AMBITIONS TO BE THE NEXT CHIEF OF STAFF IN DELHI. HE CLAIMS HE HAS BEEN CRITICIZED FOR BEING TOO FRIENDLY WITH WESTERNERS. HE WOULD BE EMBARRASSED IF WORD OF OUR CONTACT WERE TO GET BACK TO DELHI OR TO INDIAN OFFICIALS ELSEWHERE. KORN

UNQUOTE.  
SAXBE

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